

S E R M O N

WRITTEN FOR THE

MAGDALEN CHAPEL.

BY

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L O N D O N.

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D E D I C A T E D

T O

H I S G R A C E

T H E

ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY,

THE FRIEND OF HUMANITY,

THE PATRON OF GENIUS,

THE PROMOTER OF RELIGION,

THE PATTERN OF PIETY,

THE GENEROUS PROTECTOR OF

THE AUTHOR.

LET US PRAY.

FATHER of Mercies, and God of all Consolation, look down upon us thy humble creatures, the children of thy bounty, the disciples of thy ever-blessed Son, who came into this fallen world to seek and to save them that are lost. Save us, we beseech thee, from the disorderly workings of our corrupted nature, and let our hearts and spirits seek and find thy salvation in Christ Jesus. Shower down thy blessings upon those who in this house of mercy shall contribute to promote thy work of peace and reconciliation; and in the day of judgment may their benevolence be remembered and rewarded through thy goodness, and the mediation of Jesus Christ, in whose words we sum up our manifold wants, saying unto thee :

Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name ; thy kingdom come ; thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven : give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us ; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil : for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

M A T T. i. 21.

THOU SHALT CALL HIS NAME *YESUS*, FOR HE SHALL
SAVE HIS PEOPLE FROM THEIR SINS.

SUCH was the substance of the address of the angelic Prophet unto Joseph, to quiet and assure the doubts and suspicions which arose in his mind, on discovering that Mary, his reputed wife, was advancing to that important moment when Christ, as of the flesh, should be born of *her* womb. The venerable man, we find, was convinced by the heavenly wisdom, and, acting in the strictest conformity with its tenor, continued to live in the most perfect harmony with his virgin spouse. The prophecy contained in the text is no less interesting to every one of us. "To us," no less than to him, "a Son has been born," a "Child has been given;" and we are as truly the people whom this *Jesus* is to save from their sins, as the people of Judea.

If it be asked, why it is said in the text, "Thou shalt call his name *Jesus* ;—

" *For*

" he shall save his people from their sins ;"

The reason is this ;—because the spiritual sense of the Hebrew word *Jesus*, signifies *the Saviour* : and this name, it is worthy of remark, was also the name of *Joshua*, inasmuch as the two names have * one common root of derivation, and therefore must amount to the same meaning. And surely never was there a more beautiful type of our blessed Lord's mission, than the striking circumstance that though *Moses*, as the symbol of his own covenant, could only see the Land of Promise at a distance; yet *Joshua*, as standing in the prophetic sense and representation of Christ, should be permitted to enter into it himself, and thither also conduct the people of God : agreeably to that declaration of St. John, that " the law was by *Moses*, but *grace and truth*"—the revelation of *mercy and truth*, in opposition to the system of types and figures—" came by "*Jesus Christ*."

This *Jesus Christ* being then the person who was to " save his people from their sins," let us briefly consider the full import of the clause of *salvation from sin through him*.

* Namely *yw* to save.

What is it, my brethren, that we all mean by the term *salvation*? The most profligate and profane cry out, "as they hope to be *saved*;" which should imply that there lies deeply rooted in human nature a *wish* to be saved, by some means, which in themselves they are not *sure* of having, but only *hope* to attain.

Let us now consider what this general wish implies.

I. He that would know the full value and extent of *salvation*, must first consider the *curse* and *misery* of its contrary, of *damnation*.

That *curse* and that *misery* were once the doom of all human nature, in that moment when Adam died in Paradise, to the life of God, to which are essential both virtue and happiness.

From that moment to the subsequent one, when "*the seed of the woman*" was promised and inspoken into the human race, the curse and misery in question prevailed in all the bitterness of their nature. Their severity is beautifully depicted to us by Adam's declaration to God:—

I heard thy voice in the garden, and I hid myself, because I was naked and afraid.

Thus

Thus precisely is it with every convicted sinner. He hears the voice of God in that field of his *conscience* which was once the paradise of his abode ; but now the delights and comforts of paradise are gone ! the fruit of the tree of death has been eaten—and he sees that he is naked and forlorn, and he fears !

And observe the folly of his whole procedure : instead of *flying* to God, who alone can relieve him in those straits and difficulties, he *flies from him* ; he goes and *hides* himself.

Poor deluded mortal ! where canst thou go to hide thyself from the *all-seeing eye* of divine *Majesty* ?—Where canst thou conceal thyself from those *lightnings* of his presence, before whom enraptured seraphim veil their dazzled countenances, and dare not behold his glories ?

What shelter can shade him from that *consuming fire*, into which his guilt has transformed the God of Light and Love ?

If he descend to the depths of *Hell itself*, there will he inevitably

inevitably be found out by the authoritative call of—
Adam, where art thou ?

Methinks, my brethren, not one of us here present but has some time or other heard that call addressed to our consciences, and been shaken, as our first parent was, with the question—“ *Adam, where art thou ?* ”—Where, *convicted* but *not converted* sinner, where art thou fled ?—What are all the little concealments of this world, to veil you from observation before the scrutiny of that eye which “ seeth in secret ? ”—Thou *knowest* that thou canst not be hidden for *one* moment :—in the depths of *Egyptian* darkness thou art conscious that every one lieth open to him ; and the blush which glows when no human eye is within the reach of its appearance, proves to thee that thou art inevitably made manifest unto him, to whom the “ night “ is as clear as the day.”

And when thou *art* made manifest, think how *horrible* thou must appear in the presence of his *impeccable perfections* ! Picture to yourselves the effect on your own minds, the *disgusting* effect, I would say, of ugliness and deformity, in their greatest aggravations ; and you will have the faintest idea of the detestation which must exist

in the Divine Intelligence, upon the contemplation of sin. And that *sin* is *thine*—yes, 'tis *thou* who appearest in the *eye of God* in all the foulness of that spectacle, in the eye of *him* to whom thou must ever refer for every possibility of happiness.

Other things thou mayst trifle with; but no rational being can trifle with *happiness*: and *he who has been brought really to despair of obtaining it, must lose his existence or his senses.*

I have now at length conducted you, my brethren, to the very point of interest which was so important to our argument:—I have now led you to *feel*, in the idea of *despair*, the curse and misery of *damnation*.

I say, *damnation*; and pause here awhile, and think what it is that *damnation* signifies:

Hell within you!

Hell above you!

Hell below you!

The face of God turned from you!

Conscience accusing you!

Angels

Angels lamenting over you !

Devils triumphing at your fall !

It is not in my power to lift the curtain higher—

Let me rather drop it for ever!

II. Behold now, in this moment of dereliction, the “Sun of Righteousness rising” upon the gloom of this night, “with healing on his wings!”—That “light which “lighteth every man that cometh into the world,” now bursts in upon the benighted soul!

The voice of angelic harmony is heard. The empty-rear of the mind rings with “Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace and good-will!”

“Even so, blessed Jesus! come” into every humble mind; come and make it all thy own!

“Jesus thou art indeed to every one: that is the name wherewith thou shalt be called; for thou shalt “*save thy people from their sins.*”

Though their sins be as thick as the “gay motes which “people the sun-beams,” though they be “red as scar-

"let," they are yet "*the people of thy flock, and the sheep of thy hand.*"—None will be lost from thy fold, but the "sons of perdition," who "refuse to hear the voice of the Charmer, charm he never so wisely."

Thou wilt strive to "*save them from their sins.*"

It was for this benevolent purpose of a *love* most truly *divine*, that thou vouchsafedst to take upon thee our lowly nature, and to go through all the bitter processes of its misery, that thou mightest raise it again to the life of paradise, and to the participation of that divine nature which once lived unfulfilled in the creature yet unfallen. It was, I say, for this benevolent purpose, that in thy own incarnation thou deignedst even to *bleed* and to *die* for our redemption; that we might *live through* thy sacrifice!

"Greater love than this hath no man, than that a man should lay down his life for *his friends*," were the words of thy own observation to thy disciples.

But thou didst *more*—thou layedst down *thy* life for thine *enemies*!

Can I forget that when thou hangedst upon thy agonizing

nizing crofs, thou criedft out in behalf of thy murderers and perfecutors—"Father, forgive them, for they *know not* what they do?"

Could we *know to the full* what it is we do, when we neglect "*fo great falvation,*" who would dare to neglect it for one moment?

For remember, my brethren, that though you could as foon *make* a man, as *save* him by your own *works and merits*, yet it is juft as neceffary that you *should work out your falvation*, as if the *blood of your corruptions* was as valuable to the putting away of fins, as the *precious blood of the Son of God*.

Though it is Chrift which offers falvation;

It is yet your bufinefs to accept or to refuse it.

And let me tell you all how it is that you may *accept* and *refuse* it.

I. You *accept* it, when you caft yourselves down before the throne of God, own your vilenefs and nothingnefs, and the all-fufficiency of divine grace; when you
love

love your Saviour, as creatures ready to perish, whom he alone has saved, whom he alone can save ! when you are ready to hate father and mother, to cut off a right arm, or pluck out a right eye, to sacrifice your idolatrous attachment to the world, the flesh, and the Devil, *when- ever* and *wherever* they interfere, as they always do, with the love of Christ;—when you sit loose to this world, when you rejoice that here we have no continuing city, and really and truly are seeking one to come.

H. You *refuse* salvation, when you do as the children of this world do;—when you take just as much religion as will lie upon the outside of your appearance, and within one seventh part of your time;—when you do all your good, to be seen of *men*; and all your evil, as if you supposed that you were not to be seen of *God*;—when you love the praise of men more than the praise of God; when you are afraid of death, and fond of this life;—in short, when you live so as that you cannot lay your hand upon your heart, and say with transport—“ I *know* that “ my Redeemer liveth !”

Think not, however, that God Almighty expects perfection of any one of us.—“ Come unto me all ye that

“ travail

"travail and are *heavy* laden," was the language of the Prince of Peace to every wretched son of Adam—"Come unto me, and I will give you rest."

"*Why* will ye die, O house of Israel!" said God by his holy Prophet: and when we *do* die the death of the soul to happiness, it is because we *choofe* to die!

Repentance is surely within the capacity of any, of the worst sinner, who can feel the difference between his doing a bad and a good action:

And he that repents from his heart will surely find favour, mercy, and pardon—

He will taste and see that God will yet be gracious to him—

He will drink of his spirit, and be baptized with his baptism of fire—

Be made *pure*, and be made *happy*.

Oh, my brethren! let not any of us neglect this mighty offer of salvation.—To you, ye daughters of affliction, let me urge the past experience of your misery, and beseech you, by the mercies of God, to repent and be converted. I can share in all your griefs; I can feel

feel them to the bottom of my soul ! Oh Christ, hear us ! Thou Lamb of God that takest away the sins of thy people, have mercy on us !—From the depths of my sorrow do I call upon thee, and even from them I know that thou wilt listen to me !—Let me then, my dear fellow-christians, indulge the hope that you will remember to your comfort and advantage that *Jesus Christ is come to save you from your sins* ; and may he save you, both *here and hereafter* ; may this day commence a new life with every one of us ; and usher in that glorious day, when the mystery of God will be revealed in our hearts, and live there to all eternity !

And if it be in the power of any of us who have resorted to this house of mourning, to further the work of repentance, and strengthen the hands of those who have opened these gates of mercy to the afflicted, let us not be backward to contribute our mites to advance the work of God !—Remember, my brethren, that nothing can be too much to do for those for whom Christ died, whom he has styled his brethren, and in whose favour he has declared, that what we give unto them, he will receive, accept, and reward, as done unto himself.

And

(17)

And now to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
be ascribed, as is most due, all praise, might, ma-
jesty and dominion, both now and for evermore.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love
of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost,
be with us all evermore.

F I N I S.

(17)
And now to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
be ascribed, as is most due, all praise, might, and
glory and dominion, both now and for evermore.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love
of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost,
be with us all evermore.

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